

## IX. AGENCY RESPONSIVENESS TO THE COMMUNITY

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		Substantial Conformity	
	1	2	3	4 X

Missouri is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community. Information pertaining to the items assessed for this factor is provided below.

**Item 38. In implementing the provisions of the CFSP, the State engages in ongoing consultation with tribal representatives, consumers, service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child- and family-serving agencies and includes the major concerns of these representatives in the goals and objectives of the CFSP.**

☒ Strength      ☐ Area Needing Improvement

Item 38 is rated as a Strength because the State engages numerous external partners in implementing the provisions of the CFSP.

According to the Statewide Assessment, the Title IV-B Advisory Group in Missouri provides input into the development of the CFSP and gives feedback on the performance of the child welfare system. The group consists of nine external partners and three internal managers. The external partners include: University of Missouri School of Social Work, United Way, Family Court, child advocacy groups, foster care and adoption association, Department of Mental Health, Children's Treatment service providers, Children's Justice Act Task Force, State Youth Advisory Board, Office of State Court Administration, and the faith community. Individual stakeholders also provide feedback on the CFSP.

Missouri also engages in ongoing consultation with community partners through standing advisory groups, committees, task forces, policy and program work groups, and planning sessions. External partnering groups include the Children's Justice Act Task Force, Child Fatality Review Panel, and the State Youth Advisory Board. Although Missouri has no federally recognized Indian tribes, three Indian Centers provide social and child welfare services in different areas of the State. The Indian Centers also function as advocates and administrators for the Indian Child Welfare Act.

Stakeholders commenting on this issue during the onsite CFSR were in general agreement that CD engages in ongoing consultation with multiple community partners. State-level stakeholders indicated that CD is very receptive to input from the courts and advocacy organizations. They also noted that the agency uses multiple venues to access community resources, to remedy problems, and to keep lines of communication open. Jackson and St. Louis County stakeholders reported that the agency engages in ongoing consultation with its community partners. However, stakeholders in Jasper County noted that the working relationships between the agency and other agencies such as law enforcement and the school system could be improved.

**Item 39. The agency develops, in consultation with these representatives, annual reports of progress and services delivered pursuant to the CFSP.**

☒ Strength      ☐ Area Needing Improvement

Item 39 is rated as a Strength because CFSR findings indicate that the agency develops annual reports in consultation with numerous external stakeholders.

According to the Statewide Assessment, program planning committees assisted in the development of the CFSP through reviews of various drafts. These committees consisted of local, regional, and State representatives from public agencies, private providers, law enforcement, the faith community, consumers, government, and the courts. Stakeholders annually review the CD's progress on key goals and objectives.

Most state-level stakeholders commenting on this issue during the onsite CFSR indicated that the agency requests their feedback on annual reviews of agency performance.

**Item 40. The State's services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other Federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population.**

☒ Strength      ☐ Area Needing Improvement

This item is rated as a Strength because the CFSR found that the State's services under the CFSP are coordinated with other Federal programs serving the same population.

According to the Statewide Assessment, Missouri coordinates service delivery across multiple State and community agencies. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, implementation of the Federal Promoting Safe and Stable Families Act involved the creation of two major community-wide collaborations across the State. These Community Partnerships, which include public and private partners, serve as focal points for organizing and financing services for families and children. The Caring Communities links services and supports for children and families through the schools, neighborhood, and public agencies.

The Statewide Assessment also notes that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the CD partner in a number of cross-agency efforts. Other multi-agency efforts address specific issues, such as promoting fatherhood (Transition from Prison to Community Initiative), addressing child maltreatment and domestic violence (Greenbook Initiative), improving physical and sexual abuse examinations for child victims (Sexual Abuse Forensic Exam Advisory Group), preventing teen drug use (Drug-Free Communities), meeting the needs of drug-exposed infants and mothers (Perinatal Substance Abuse Advisory Committee), and providing mental health services to children with severe needs (System of Care initiative). However, as noted in the Statewide Assessment, not all of these initiatives operate statewide due to limited funding resources.

Stakeholders commenting on this issue during the onsite CFSR commended the coordination and delivery of services by the child welfare agency and other social services. Stakeholders noted that CD coordinates services with Head Start programs and with the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program. They also remarked favorably on the System of Care initiative. However, stakeholders noted that recent implementation of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPPA) has hampered open discussions and access to information across providers regarding health-related matters.

The Greenbook Initiative, which promotes collaboration among community members to develop interventions and measure progress for improving responses to child maltreatment and domestic violence, is being piloted in St. Louis and Jackson Counties. The Family Court of St. Louis County and Jackson County Domestic Violence Coordinated Community Council are the lead agencies.

According to stakeholder interviews, the goal of the Greenbook Initiative is to achieve: 1) increased safety and well-being for adult and child victims of abuse; 2) increased accountability of batterers; 3) a comprehensive community service system with multiple points of entry to address the needs of a wide range of family circumstances; and 4) system change within and between the primary partner agencies that incorporates best practices and Greenbook recommendations. The Initiative was cited by stakeholders as an exemplary model of community collaboration between the Children's Division, the Circuit Courts, and the domestic violence service providers.